

NEW YORK DAILY NEWS
13 April 1983

Can act in area, U.S. says

By BARBARA REHM

Washington (News Bureau)—The Reagan administration said yesterday that the United States has the moral right to "safeguard democracy and stability in our immediate neighborhood." It warned the Soviet Union and Cuba against sending jets or combat troops into Nicaragua to help the Marxist regime cope with a rising rebellion.

Against a background of congressional opposition to America's not-so-secret war against the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, the administration insisted the U.S. was breaking no law in its policies toward Nicaragua.

Secretary of State Shultz told a news conference that "so far as I know there is no violation" of the law.

CIA Director William Casey reportedly offered similar assurances to the Senate Intelligence Committee in a secret session.

In a series of public appearances by senior officials, the administration sought to underscore adherence to the law, but pointedly refused to answer direct questions on U.S. financing for insurgents in Nicaragua.

UNITED NATIONS Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick insisted the U.S. had a "moral right" to send military and financial aid to groups that may try to overthrow the Sandinista government.

"Do I think that the U.S. should protect the government of Nicaragua against the anger of its own people? The answer is, no, I don't think so," she said. "In the situation in which, for example, there are 120,000 Soviet occupational troops in Afghanistan... I think we have a moral right to support the Afghan freedom fighters.

"In a situation in which the Soviets and Cubans are supporting in a very, very important large-scale way the destabilization of virtually all governments of Central America and... talking about implanting in Central America missiles aimed at the U.S., I think we have the moral right to do that," she said in a TV interview.

Thomas O. Enders, assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs, testifying before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, declined to discuss U.S. covert operations in Central America but insisted "we must safeguard democracy and stability in our immediate neighborhood."

He accused the Sandinistas of exporting revolutionary subversion that threatens vital U.S. security interests in Mexico and the Panama Canal and of betraying the Nicaraguan people by dashing their hopes for peace and democracy.